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- Newberry, J. S.*—The origin of the carbonaceous matter in bituminous shales. Ext. Annals N. Y. Academy of Sciences, 1883. From the author.
- Owen, Rd.*—Aspects of the body in Vertebrates and Invertebrates. London, 1883. From the author.
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- Von Graff, L.*—Verzeichniss der von den United States Coast Survey steamers *Hassler* and *Blake* von 1867 zu 1879 gesammelten Myzostomiden. Bull. Mus. Comp. Zool., Vol. XI, No. 7. From Professor Alex. Agassiz.
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- Filhol, M. H.*—Observations relatives au memoire de M. Cope intitulé Relation des horizons renfermant des debris d'animaux vertébrés fossiles en Europe et en Amérique. From the author.
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- Agassiz, Alex.*—Report on the Echini. Rep. on the res. of dredging in the Gulf of Mexico 1877-78, Caribbean sea, 1878-79, and Atlantic coast, U. S., 1880, by the U. S. Coast Surv. steamer *Blake*. Mem. Mus. Comp. Zool., Vol. x, No. 1, Cambridge. From the author.

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GENERAL NOTES.

GEOGRAPHY AND TRAVELS.¹

AFRICA.—THE CONGO, FROM ITS MOUTH TO BOLOBO.—Mr. H. H. Johnstone (Proc. Roy. Geog. Soc., Dec., 1883) not only describes the lower course of the Congo, but gives a map and details respecting the aspect of the western coast of South Africa generally. The forest belt of Africa extends from Sierra Leone to the Ogowé, a little to the south of which it is succeeded by the park-like scenery so characteristic of South Africa. The thick forest is determined by the perpetual rains, and its absence in the country, which has a dry season of greater or less duration, is determined by the fires which, started by the natives among the long dry grass, sweep the forest from the hills. This well-timbered but open country is at first a narrow strip along the coast, but the boundary line soon bends to the east. The limit of the oil-palm (*Elais guineensis*) is approximately 10° S. lat., but along the coast it does not stretch far south of the Congo mouth. A little to the south of the Congo, between Ambrizete and Cabeca da Cobra, the park-like scenery begins to retreat from the coast, and is followed by a region of sparse vegetation, with euphorbias and aloes, and occasionally baobabs, mimosas, and figs, and where there is often less than two months rain in the year. Patches of this kind of country, broken by timber along the rivers, fringe the coast as far south as Benguela, where a belt commences and runs far into the interior. At about the 13th parallel this region of scanty vegetation gives way to absolute desert, which is a prolongation along the south-western coast of the Kalahari desert. The northward trend of the Congo brings its course above Stanley pool into the region of forest and perpetual rain.

The sandy wastes between Mossamedes and Orange river grow little but the strange Welwitschia and a few stunted Bauhinias, but the park-like country has the Hyphœne-palm, the oil-palm, the cottonwood, the baobab, figs, mimosas, numerous splendid papilionaceous trees, etc. This is also the country of the large game animals. The thick forest, where vegetable life rules supreme, shelters the anthropoid apes, which thus do not approach within 100 miles of the northern bank of the Lower

¹This department is edited by W. N. LOCKINGTON, Philadelphia.